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**MAD- 2020**  
**Day - 13**  
**HISTORY**

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**Question:**

Critically examine the compulsions which prompted India to play a decisive role in the emergence of Bangladesh.

**Answer:**

Pakistan was created around the ideological assumption that, because of their faith, the Muslims of India constituted a separate nation. However, soon after independence the West Pakistani political and economic elite soon acquired a dominant position in Pakistan's state apparatus discriminating against East Pakistan. Moreover, in the absence of political democracy, the Bengalis had no mechanism through which to remedy the situation. After Sheikh Mujibur Rehman had won a landslide victory in the elections of 1970, in a sudden move on 25 March 1971, Yahya Khan ordered a military crackdown on East Pakistan. Mujibur Rahman was arrested and taken to an unknown destination in West Pakistan. The West Pakistan army initiated a reign of terror, and this impacted India directly.

1. They killed innocent citizens, burnt villages and crops.
2. Thousands of intellectual's and Bengali members of the police and army were indiscriminately but systematically eliminated in order to deprive the people of any leadership.
3. For over six months, the army committed rape, torture, arson, brutal killings and other heinous crimes.
4. The Awami League leaders, who succeeded in escaping to Calcutta, formed a Government of Bangladesh in exile, organized the Mukti Bahini (Liberation Army) and launched a fierce underground movement and guerrilla warfare.
5. The brutality of the Pakistan army was specially directed against the Hindus remaining in East Pakistan who were faced with virtual genocide. They, along with a large number of Muslims, Christians and Buddhists, were forced to migrate to and seek shelter in West Bengal, Assam and Meghalaya in India.

By November 1971, the number of refugees from East Bengal had reached ten million. It was clear by this time that even though India did not ask to be a party to this strife it could not escape from it.

However, it had long been clear to Indira Gandhi that war with Pakistan was likely. So, to secure India's neighborhood, almost from the outset in April 1971, the Indian armed forces had begun to prepare, in utmost secrecy, for swift military action.

India gave sanctuary to the Bangladesh government in exile; Indian army gave military training on Indian soil and material aid in money and military equipment to the Mukti Bahini; India tried to gather international support in favor of the Bangladeshi cause, and to counter any potential threat from China and the US, in case of a war with Pakistan, India signed a treaty with the USSR. So, while it can be said that the reign of terror by West Pakistan on Bangladesh necessitated the revolt, and led to the war which made Bangladesh an independent country, India was aware of the situation and nudged it the direction of its choice to secure its interests in the region.